

Claims

We Claim:

1. An apparatus for automatically opening a swinging door comprising: an actuator further comprising at least one proximity sensor for detecting at least one proximity zone corresponding to individual iconic instructions comprising a display; a control unit in electronic communication with said actuator; and a power assisted drive mechanism in electronic communication with said control unit wherein said power assisted drive mechanism operates to open said door through the reverse activation of a conventional door closer.

2. The automatic door opening apparatus of claim 1 wherein the proximity detector detects the proximity of an individual.

3. The automatic door opening apparatus of claim 1 wherein the proximity detector display provides iconic instructions to an individual based on the proximity of the individual to said proximity detector.

4. The automatic door opening apparatus of claim 3 wherein the proximity display provides an audible signal based on the proximity of the

individual to the actuator.

5. The automatic door opening apparatus of claim 4 wherein the proximity display provides an iconic instruction for an individual to perform an affirmative action to cause the proximity detector to activate the actuator.

6. The automatic door opening apparatus of claim 5 wherein said affirmative action comprises waving a hand proximate to the proximity detector.

7. The automatic door opening apparatus of claim 1 wherein the proximity detector is of sufficient distance from said inward swinging door to prevent the individual from impeding the opening door.

8. A method of automatically opening an inward swinging restroom door comprising the utilization of: an actuator further comprising a proximity sensor, having a plurality of proximity zones corresponding to individual iconic instructions comprising a display; a control unit in electronic communication with said actuator and a power assisted drive mechanism in electronic communication with said control unit wherein said power assisted drive mechanism operates to open said door through the reverse activation of a

conventional door closer whereby the swinging restroom door is opened automatically.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the proximity sensor detects the proximity of an individual.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the proximity sensor display provides an audible signal based on the proximity of the individual to the actuator.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said actuator provides an iconic instruction for an individual not to touch the proximity detector.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the actuator provides an iconic instruction for an individual to perform an affirmative action to cause the actuator to activate the control unit.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said affirmative action comprises waving a hand proximate to the actuator.

14. The method of claim 8 wherein the actuator is in a location sufficient to prevent the individual from impeding the opening of said door.

15. An actuator comprising a proximity sensor capable of detecting the presence of an individual in at least one proximity zone and further comprising at least one individual iconic instruction corresponding to said proximity zone.

16. The actuator of claim 15 wherein said proximity zones correspond to a preset distance of the individual from the actuator.

17. The actuator of claim 16 wherein an individual's presence in a first zone initiates an iconic signal to draw an individual's attention to and not touch said actuator.

18. The actuator of claim 17 wherein an individual's presence in a second zone initiates an iconic signal instructing an individual to make an affirmative action in proximity to said actuator.

19. The actuator of claim 15 wherein an individual's presence in any of said proximity zones initiates an audible signal.

20. The actuator of claim 18 wherein said affirmative action activates a control unit, wherein said control unit sends an electronic signal to a power assisted drive mechanism

comprising a means for engaging, opening and disengaging a door, utilizing an existing door closer, thereby allowing said door closer to control the speed of the closing door when said engagement means is disengaged.